

1 Samuel 28 - Thursday, September 18th, 2014

1 Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men." 2 So David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever."

- So, I suppose it probably goes without saying but David now finds himself trapped because of his sin of lying, which is finding him out.
- Also I find David's answer in verse 2 most interesting in that he is being ambiguous and disingenuous in neither denying nor confirming it.
- In other words, he's not telling Achish he will fight his own people, nor is he saying that he won't, he simply says, you know what I can do.

- One has to wonder what's going through David's mind right about now. Doubtless, he must be thinking that his lies have now trapped him.
- This is a textbook case of the "chickens coming home to roost," in the sense that David's sin of lying has now come back to haunt him.
- This is how it is for us when we succumb to the temptation of lying, thinking that somehow by doing so, we'll avoid a difficult confrontation.

I like how one commentator said it; "There's always a price to pay. Every temptation the devil sends our way is gift-wrapped as a present. Yes, David was given Ziklag. But sixteen months later, the bill comes due."

3 Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. 4 Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.

- Here we see the narrative turn a corner of sorts and shift the focus of our attention from David's sin-imposed situation to Saul's trepidation.
- What's interesting to me in these verses is that we're given some detail as it relates to the geographical positioning of the Philistine army.
- Also, we're given the specific location of the Israelite army as well, which tells me that this detail is significant enough to include in the text.

- I'm of the belief the inclusion of this detail has to do with how much land belonging to the Israelites, the Philistines had ended up occupying.
- The reason I point this out is because of the "why" and the "how," namely why and how the Philistines were able to take that much of Israel.
- The answer to both why and how is that Saul had been too busy trying to kill David, who wasn't his enemy; he didn't battle the real enemy.

- You probably already know where I'm going with this, but so too is this true for us when it comes to our spiritual battle against our enemy.
- I'm sure you've heard it said pick your battles wisely. Such is the case here with Saul, such that he has picked the wrong battle foolishly.
- Sadly, this is a similar case of the aforementioned "chickens coming home to roost," for Saul as well, only this time, it will cost Saul his life.

- Before we on to verse six, I think we would be grossly remiss were we not to take just a moment on this matter of mediums and spiritists.
- This because, they are the modern day equivalent of occultism with practices such as Ouija Boards, Horoscopes, and other occultic arts.
- The point being is they are forbidden for what should be deemed obvious reason, chief of which is that they're doorways for the demonic.

6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

- This verse is one of the most terrifying verses in the entire Bible. I can't think of a worse fate than when God ceases to answer someone.
- Notice when Saul inquires of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him in any of the three ways he hoped, dreams, the Urim or the prophets.
- In other words, all the communication lines have been severed, and this by Saul himself as a result of his refusal to heed the Word of God.

7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor." 8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."

- What Saul does here is wrong on every level and for every reason, the first of which is that he is disguising himself as he slips out at night.
- Then, if this weren't bad enough, he seeks out this medium and asks her to conduct a séance in order to bring up the spirit of the dead.
- The problem is Saul, more than anyone knows that everyone who would do this will bring upon themselves a curse from the hand of God.

Leviticus 20:6 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.'

- While it certainly doesn't excuse what Saul does here, it may in some way explain what Saul does, but whom else does he have to turn to.

One commentator of this wrote, "In his state of despair, Saul had no one to whom he could turn other than the devil, so he sought the help of one of his agents. What a contrast between the Saul of chapters 9–12 and the Saul of chapter 28!"

9 Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" 10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing."

- It's important to keep in mind that she does not yet know that this is Saul, which is why she refers to him concerning her being put to death.
- Then, for Saul to say that he, in effect, will swear to God that no punishment of death will come upon her for doing this is really laughable.
- The reason I say that is because Saul is certainly in no position to be invoking the name of God, let alone swearing by the name of God.

- Be that as it may, what Saul does not yet know is that this will be the last time he ever uses the name of the Lord, and he does so to swear.
- If this weren't bad enough, he uses the name of the Lord in a way that's clearly against the commands of the Lord concerning necromancy.
- This woman will not only find out this is indeed Saul, she will be the instrument through whom comes pronouncement of the death of Saul.

Of Saul's deception one commentator wrote, "This shows the depth of Saul's fall from God, and how it affected his mind. He obviously isn't thinking clearly here. Once Saul rejected the truth, he was likely to fall for even the most foolish deception."

11 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!" 13 And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." 14 So he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down.

- These verses are very interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is the debate amongst commentators about the meaning.
- Let me explain, first, there are those who suggest that Samuel did not really appear to the medium, and that it was a demonic deception.
- However, this doesn't make sense when you realize that Satan would never be complicit with God's judgment. As such, this was Samuel.

Adam Clarke says, "I believe Samuel did actually appear to Saul; and that he was sent by the especial mercy of God to warn this infatuated king of his approaching death, that he might have an opportunity to make his peace with his Maker."

G. Campbell Morgan had this to say, "That he did appear to Saul, there can be no question, but he did not come in response to her call. He was sent of God, for the express purpose of rebuking Saul for his unholy traffic with these evil things, and to pronounce his doom."

- There's another issue that has to be dealt with here, and it has to do with the fascination the world has today with the modern day psychics.
- I'm aware of one reality TV program, which features this "Long Island Medium," as she's called, who claims to speak for dead loved ones.
- The fact of the matter is, this woman is hearing from demons who know specific things about a person but claim to actually be that person.

15 Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." 16 Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17 And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.

- It's interesting that instead of Samuel telling Saul what he should do, he tells him what it is God will actually do, which is to bring his death.
- The reason being is that it is too late for Saul, here-to-for, he had disobeyed the Lord in continually refusing to heed the Word of the Lord.
- It's for this reason that Samuel would say, "So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy."

G. Campbell Morgan again says it best this way, "God never departs from a man until the man has departed from Him. Then, in the interests of righteousness, God is against that man."

19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

- It's important to understand that verse nineteen is not saying that Saul and his two sons would end up in the place of paradise with Samuel.
- This because, the place known as Abraham's bosom had two parts one of which was the place of comfort and the other a place of torment.
- We know this because of the account Jesus spoke of recorded in Luke's gospel, 16:19-31, where he talks about the rich man and Lazarus.

Luke 16:19-31 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' 25But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' 27He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 30'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31'He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

- What's really sad about this is that Jonathan will die along side his father, king Saul, as a result of his father's disobedience to the Lord.
- Adam Clarke has some heartfelt insight into this when he writes, "Can any person read this, properly considering the situation of this unfortunate monarch, the triumph of the enemies of God, and the speedy ruin in which the godlike Jonathan is about to be involved, without feeling the keenest anguish of heart?"

20 Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night. 21 And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. 22 Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way." 23 But he refused and said, "I will not eat." So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. 24 Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread from it. 25 So she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

- What a tragic ending to a tragic life, as Saul has his last meal in the house of a witch, before knowingly going to his, and his sons death.
- I would suggest that the take away here is that all of this that Saul and even David are going through could have been avoided entirely.
- Had they but obeyed the Lord, they would not have suffered unnecessarily as a result of their willful disobedience to the Word of the Lord.